

'Hidden' Form Of Ileitis In Swine Poses Big Threat

New Approach Unveiled To Help

ORLANDO, Fla. — Swine researchers attending the American Association of Swine Veterinarians' annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., presented a new approach to a problem pork producers may not even realize their animals are suffering from — subclinical ileitis — a disease that seems invisible, but inflicts noticeable damage.

Unlike clinical ileitis, where producers see diarrhea, feed passage, gauntness, and even death, subclinical ileitis presents no visible signs. However, pigs suffer depressed performance due to Lawsonia intracellularis infection, the cause of all forms of ileitis.

Dr. Roberto Guedes, a swine researcher who specializes in ileitis at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil, says, "Based on high seroprevalence in swine herds around the world, it seems most populations are infected with subclinical ileitis." A NAHMS serology study supports this assertion for U.S. producers. It found *L. intracellularis* was present in 96.2 percent of tested herds.

This is in contrast to only 37 percent of grow-finish operations found to have clinical ileitis in the USDA's Swine 2000 survey.

Trial data previously presented by Dr. Nate Winkelman, a swine veterinarian from Morris, Minn., underscored the serious impact subclinical ileitis can have on operations. He reported pigs with subclinical ileitis showed a 30 percent decrease in average daily gain with 23 percent worse feed efficiency — an impact that could devastate pig flow and profitability.

Dr. John Deen, a University of Minnesota swine veterinarian and researcher, tells producers and veterinarians not to underestimate the negative impact ileitis can have on pig performance and profitability. "Ileitis is often not as predictable as respiratory disease, but in many cases, more significant in the amount of insult on average daily gain in infected pigs," he says. "That's why producers need to look at interventions that reduce growth variation."

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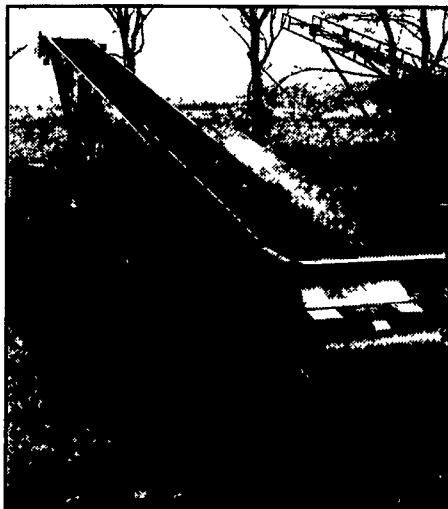


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